

Appl. No. 09/981,202
Amdt. dated March 30, 2005
Reply to Office action of January 11, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant has received the Office action dated January 11, 2005, in which the Examiner: 1) rejected claims 2, 4, 8, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nunn (U.S. Pat. No. 6,317,828); 2) rejected claims 5, 13, 14, 16 and 19 under § 103(a) as obvious over Nunn; 3) rejected claims 3 and 15 as obvious over Nunn in view of Zimmer (U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0097581); and 4) rejected claims 6, 17 and 18 as obvious over Nunn in view of "BIOS Boot Specification, Version 1.01 (1996)." With this Response, Applicant has amended claims 4, 8, and 16. Based on the arguments and amendments contained herein, Applicant believes all claims are in condition for allowance.

Applicant provides the following overview for the Examiner's convenience. This overview should not be used to narrowly construe the claims—the claims speak for themselves. Applicant's disclosure relates to an easy and efficient mechanism to permit an operator to configure a computer's option devices (e.g., add-in cards). An option device, for example, might have a number of settings that dictate its operation. Any one or more of these settings can be changed by an operator of the computer. Re-configuring an option device without Applicant's contribution required the operator of the computer to know about and activate whatever configuration process that particular option card required. Different option devices have different mechanisms for re-configuring the devices, thereby placing an administrative burden on the operator.

Applicant's contribution generally involves centralizing the process of changing the configuration of an option device to the computer's system basic input/output system ("BIOS"). Via the system BIOS, the operator can modify those system attributes typically accessible via the BIOS (e.g., enabling/disabling various ports) as well as select a particular option device to re-configure. Once the option device has been re-configured by the operator, software control passes back to the system BIOS and another option device can be selected if desired.

Nunn relates to something quite different—the initialization process for the computer. More specifically, Nunn relates to a system setup program that selects for display one or more devices to serve as the "boot device" for the computer

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system. The boot device causes an operating system to be loaded. Examples of boot devices include a hard drive and a floppy drive. The problem solved by Nunn was that more devices might be present in a system that can function as a boot device than can be displayed by a typical setup program. Nunn also provides an operator some degree of control over the priority by which various devices serve as the system's boot device. See e.g., col. 4, lines 9-33. Nunn is not related to permitting an operator the ability to re-configure an option device. The claims are patentable for the reasons delineated below.

Applicant amends claim 4 to specify the claimed "option ROM code" is code that is "usable by an operator to configure the option device." It is this option ROM code for which the operator searches. Specifically, the claim requires that the system ROM searches for "a predefined signature" that identifies certain information. The information includes "an option device identification value and an indication of the location of the option ROM code."

Nunn does not teach this combination of limitations. The Examiner seems to equate the BIOS connection vector pointers (BCVS) as being akin to the claimed "predefined signature." Office action, page 3. The claimed predefined signature, however, identifies the "information" that includes an option device identification value and an indication of the location of the option ROM code. Nunn's BCVS pointers are only pointers and do not also include option device identification values. Nunn, col. 3, lines 10-15.

Further, Nunn does not fairly teach that the option ROM code is usable by an operator to configure the option device. While Nunn does have references to device initialization, nowhere does Nunn teach or even suggest that the option ROM code that is being searched permits an operator of the system to configure the option device. As is well known, device configuration is distinct from device initialization. Nunn makes reference to an operator being able to configure the order by which devices are used to boot the system. For example, col. 1 of Nunn refers to the initial program load (IPL) and an operator being able to prioritize the devices listed in the IPL. Prioritizing the list of devices in the system's IPL is patentably distinct from configuring an option device itself. The other art of record

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does not satisfy the deficiencies of Nunn. For either or both of these reasons, claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable over Nunn.

Dependent claim 6 requires that the "table further includes a mask value that permits multiple types of option devices to use the option ROM code pertaining to a single table." For this limitation, the Examiner turned to pages 32 and 33 of the BIOS Boot Specification. Applicant finds no mention on pages 32-33, or elsewhere, of a mask value as claimed, that is, one that permits "multiple types of option devices to use the option ROM code pertaining to a single table." The "option ROM code" of claim 6 is option ROM code that is "usable by an operator to configure the option device" (see claim 4). For this additional reason, claim 6 is allowable.

Applicant amends claim 8 to specify that the set of information being sought by way of system ROM code searching for the predefined value includes an "identification value" of an option device and "a location value that is used to determine the location of the option ROM code." Nunn does not teach or even suggest that the system ROM code permits a search for a predefined value that indicates the location of the set of information as claimed. The other art of record is similarly meritless. For at least this reason, claim 8 and its dependent claims are allowable.

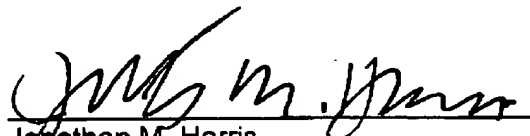
Applicant amends claim 16 to specify that the search for the option ROM configuration table comprises "a search for a signature associated with information, said information comprises an identifier of the option device and a value that indicates the location of option ROM code that is usable by an operator to change the configuration of the option device." For the reasons discussed above, claim 16 and its dependent claims are patentable over the art of record. Dependent claim 18 was amended merely to maintain consistency with the amended language of claim 16.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of

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time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to Hewlett-Packard Development Company's Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonathan M. Harris
PTO Reg. No. 44,144
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.
(713) 238-8000 (Phone)
(713) 238-8008 (Fax)
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANT

HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY
Intellectual Property Administration
Legal Dept., M/S 35
P.O. Box 272400
Fort Collins, CO 80527-2400